

Che Guevara's Body Shown to Reporters

By John M. Goshko
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LA PAZ, Oct. 10—The commander of the Bolivian armed forces said tonight that the guerrilla who was shot Sunday by Bolivian troops had identified himself minutes before his death as the legendary Communist revolutionary Ernesto Che Guevara.

Gen. Alfredo Ovando Candia made this statement at Vallegrande, the remote east Bolivian jungle outpost where the body is being held pending an expected transfer to this Bolivian capital.

Ovando told Bolivian government officials and journalists who had accompanied him to Vallegrande that the man had made two statements yesterday before succumbing to gunshot wounds: He said he was Che Guevara, and he said

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Che Guevara, the revolutionary of the Western world. Page A24.

that the Communist revolution he had attempted to incite in Bolivia had failed.

[Newsmen at Vallegrande were shown the corpse, and Richard Gott of The Manchester Guardian said the body "was undoubtedly that of Guevara." Gott had met Guevara in Havana in 1963.

[The body was flown to Vallegrande and then to the runners of a helicopter yesterday, Christopher Roper of Reuters reported from that outpost. Dressed in bloody clothes, it was put on a slab, fingerprinted and embalmed.]

The Bolivian military's claim that the dead guerrilla was Guevara rests partly on the fingerprints taken at Vallegrande.

Diplomatic sources here say privately they have seen proof that the fingerprints check with those given by authorities in Argentina, the country of Guevara's birth.

These sources say the fingerprints also gibe with those on two forged Uruguayan passports allegedly used by a guerrilla leader named "Ramon." Two weeks ago, the Bolivian government charged before the Organization of American States that "Ramon" was actually the code name being used by Guevara in Bolivia. Today Ovando said Guevara's diary was found in his knapsack.

Photographs made of the body at Vallegrande and brought to La Paz tonight indicate that if the man killed there was not Guevara it was someone who looked enough like him to be his twin. The photos, which include several closeup head shots, show the dead man had the scraggly beard that made Guevara's face famous.

Last spring, when Commu-

nist guerrilla activity began in Bolivia, speculation about Guevara began. This speculation was fueled considerably by the arrest of Jules Regis Debray, a young French Marxist and Castro confidante who said he had come to interview Guevara. Debray's trial resumed today in Camiri.

On Sunday, a Bolivian army patrol engaged a guerrilla group near Vallegrande in a bloody battle that resulted in the deaths of four soldiers and four guerrillas. Yesterday, the commander of the Eighth Army Division, which encompasses the guerrillas zone, announced officially that Guevara was among the dead, expiring from several wounds before he could be given medical attention.

Christopher Roper of Reuters added from Vallegrande:

As soon as the body was taken across the airport to a shed which serves as the town's mortuary, a stout balding man dressed in jungle green uniform attempted to stop newsmen from seeing the body.

Although he was not identified, the man, in his mid-30s, appeared to be directing the operation. There was conjecture here that the man was a Cuban exile working for the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

"Let's get the hell out of here," he shouted in English, when a truck drew up in front of the morgue. Later he professed no knowledge of English to the only two English-speaking persons in the crowd of 200.

Guevara's body was placed on a slab still dressed in a bloodied green jacket with a zippered front, patched, faded green denim pants, green woolen socks and a pair of obviously home-made moccasins.